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A COMPLETE WORK ON "DUTTA-CHAUDHURY" FAMILY

*Bharadwaja Gotra*

## THE DUTTAS

*Bally Dutta family; Andul Dutta Chaudhury family; Chitpore Dutta Family; Hatkhola Dutta Family*

- By **Dhruba Dutta Chaudhury, Andul, WB, India**  
(Bonobihari Dutta Chaudhury's grandson and 27th from Purushottam Dutta)

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Purushottam Dutta, the founder of our family, was born in the great *kayastha* **Dutta** family of *Bharadwaja Gotra*. He was rooted in devotion for the Lord, devoted to the welfare of all, and fully endowed with the virtues of the great *Rishi* (sage) *Bharadwaja* who was the head of our *gotra* (clan or lineage). Purushottam Dutta was destined by divine will to establish this Dutta family. The English translation of a Sanskrit verse dedicated to Purushottam Dutta is provided in the book "Dutta Chaudhuri Chronicles".

In an essay "*Alpines in Eastern India*", historian Kanaklal Barua writes that Alpine Aryans (an Aryan sub- race descending from the Celts of Central Europe in Neolithic times) immigrated to India in the third millennium B.C. One group settled down in Central-North India, another in Gujarat, and a third group went to Bengal. Barua references another historian, Dr. B.S. Guha who, in "*Census of India, Vol I Part III, 1931*" considers Nagar Brahmins of Gujarat to be ethnically related to Bengali *Kayasthas* ... at one time they officiated as priests of the Alpine Aryans. Mr.Guha also thinks that Bengali *Brahmins* are near cousins of Bengali *Kayasthas*.

Again, on page 182 of "*Alpines in Eastern India*", Barua reference three inscriptions dated between 7th to 8th century A.D. found in Assam, Bengal, and Orissa, in which local kings in these provinces donated lands to Brahmins whose surnames match with those of modern-day Bengali *Kayasthas* such as Ghosa (Ghosh), **Dutta**, Vasu (Basu), Mitra etc., thus validating the possibility of these communities being of a common Alpine Aryan heritage. Brahmins such as Mukhopadhyay, Bandhopadhyay, Chattopadhyay, Ghoshal, and Gangopadhyay came out of intermixture with Vedic Aryans or Mediterranean Aryans (descending respectively from Northern and Southern Europe) who had also migrated to India in pre- historic times. In addition to such history of a noble background, the *Kayasthas* of Bengal have done exceptionally well since the 14th century. Many became prosperous *zamindars* (landlords), educators, doctors, and reformers who significantly contributed to the Bengal Renaissance, in the fields of philosophy, literature, science and politics.

So, giving credence to Barua's historical inference, the Dutta Chaudhury zamindari family of Andul is of "Alpine Aryan" heritage. Furthermore, we ... the descendants of Purushottam Dutta ... like other *Kayastha* families have done well as *zamindars*, educators, doctors, engineers & reformers.

Kannauj used to be a centre of Aryan civilization and culture, and the capital of Harsha's empire in 7th century A.D. Kannauj declined after being conquered and destroyed by Turkish tribes under Mahmud of Ghazni in 1018.

**We, the DUTTAS, are descendants of Purushottam Dutta who moved from Kannauj to Bengal in the 10th century A.D. ... more than 1,000 years ago.** He was one of the five *Kayasthas* (*Makaranda Ghosha, Virata Guha, Dasharatha Basu, Kalidasa Mitra, & our Purusottama Dutta*) who were sent by King Chandraketu of Kannauj to Bengal. They were accompanied by five Brahmins (*Sriharsa Mukhopadhyay, Vattanarayan Bandhopadhyay, Daksha Chattopadhyay, Chandor Ghoshal, and Vedgarva Gangopadhyay*). King Chandraketu had sent this team in response to a request by his son-in-law, King Adisur of Bengal, whose mission as the foremost member of the *Sena Dynasty* was to re-establish Vedic control of his kingdom after years of Buddhist influence due to the previous rulers of the *Pala dynasty*.

The real motivation for King Adisur to invite the Kayasthas must have been to strengthen his administration with their talent and experience. After they came, the Ghosh, Basu, Mitra, and our DUTTA clans remained in South Bengal, while the Guhas apparently moved to East Bengal because of problems with the King.

Purushottam Dutta, our ancestor, settled down at a village called Bally which is currently a town in the Howrah district of South-West Bengal (Dakshin Rahra), on the bank of the Bhagirathi River. Since then, his family earned the name as the DUTTAs of BALLY, and he became known as the founder of "Kannaujiya Dutta Family of South Bengal".

Purushottam's grandsons were Kanak **Dutta and Nilambar Dutta**. Nilambar stayed back in Bally, but, Kanak moved to a village known as „Kadam Dandi“ of West Midnapore in 11th century A.D. So, the DUTTAs of Midnapore became the very first off-shoot of the DUTTA family of BALLY. Midnapore Collegiate School, established in Midnapore in 1834, has a history of some teachers and students having participated as revolutionaries during India's struggle for independence. Mrigen Dutta, who became a martyr in the cause of Mother India's struggle to free herself from the tyranny of British rule, may well have been a glorious descendant of Kanak Dutta. In 12th century A.D., Ram Chandra Dutta, the great grandson of Kanak, moved to a place call "Chatra" in Hooghly district of West Bengal.

There is an 18th century (~ 1723 A.D.) Radha-Damodar temple with terracotta plaques located in a small courtyard of the Dutta family residence of Dutta-para, Joypur. The temple is dedicated to of Vishnu, Kali, and Damodar.

**Narayan Dutta** (7th descendant of Purushottam, from Nilambar's lineage) started attending the Sena court of Ballal Sen and Lakshman Sen. Now, Ballal Sen was the one who injected the concept of "*Kulinism*" into the caste system of the Brahmins and Kayasthas of Bengal who had migrated from Kannauj at the invitation of King Adisur. So, all five Kannaujiya Brahmins and *Kannaujiya Kayasthas* were initially declared as "*Kulin*"; the highest level in the social hierarchy. Later, young Narayan Dutta became a victim of caste politics in Ballal Sen's court. Narayan, though unsophisticated, was proud of his heritage. In the court, he expressed his independence by saying that he was not a servant of the Brahmins. The Brahmins conspired to take revenge on Narayan, and compelled Ballal Sen to deny "*kulin*" status to our DUTTA family. Our DUTTAs remained identified as "*kayastha*", instead of "*kulin kayastha*". However, Narayan Dutta continued to be respected as a leader of the society. Because of their common history of immigration from Kannauj, the Ghosh, Basu, and Mitra *kulin* families even to this day treat the Duttas as one of their own for purposes of social and family relationships.

**Murari Dutta**, the great grandson of Narayan Dutta, had two sons – **Ganapati Dutta and Tekari Dutta**. The elder son, Ganapati, moved to a place called "Halisahar". The younger son, Tekari (12th in Purushottam's lineage) moved from Bally to Andul and established his residence in the 14th century. Tekari Dutta had inherited enough capital from his father to be able to acquire the extensive property of Muzzaffarpur Pargana, and become established as the first zamindar of Andul. "*Pargana*" is a word of Persian origin, used as an administrative unit by the Muslim rulers of India. In 1793 the British abolished pargana system in favour of the zamindari system, in which *zamindars* were made the absolute owners of rural lands.

Tekari's residence was said to have been built on 252 *bighas* of land. He was later awarded the title of "**Chaudhury**" by the contemporary *Nawab* of Bengal; most probably Ghiasuddin Azam Shah. The *zamindar* Tekari's lineage began to known as the **DUTTA CHAUDHURY family of Andul**. So, the DUTTA CHAUDHURY family of Andul is the second off-shoot of the DUTTA family of Bally, and through the years established connections with many other *bonedi baris* or aristocratic families of Calcutta city. Many a times, Raja Radhakanta Deb Bahadur (of Sova Bazar Raj Bari, *Raja Kali Krishna Ln, Sovabazar, Calcutta- 700004*) attended '*Dharma-Sabha*' with Golok Chandra Dutta Chaudhury (grand-son of Srimanta Dutta Chaudhury, founder of the Royal Family of Dinajpur ... Dinajpur Rajbari) along with the Bhubaneswar Kar Roy of the "Kar-Roy"s of Andul (*the Raj family of Andul*).

My mother, Pampa (Mitra) Dutta Chaudhury, (d/o of Rabindranath and Uma Mitra) belong from the well-known 'kulin-kayastha' **Mitra family of Naihati**, in the district of North 24 Parganas, West Bengal. Kalidasa Mitra was the founder of this Mitra family of *Bishwamitra gotro*. The legendary singer, Shyamal Mitra, is of the same ancestral lineage. Rabindranath Mitra, my maternal grand-father happened to move out from his Naihati house, after getting a well-flourished job in Jenson and Nicholson India Limited (once the leading paint company) and settled in Sadgope Para Ln of Serampore in the Hooghly district of West Bengal. Rabindranath Mitra used to visit his ancestral Naihati house quite often, which eventually stopped after his death in the year of 1991.

My grand-mother, Emily (Roy Chaudhury) Dutta Chaudhury (d/o Jyotindra Mohon and Roshmunjuri Roy Chaudhury) was from the royal **zamindar Roy Chaudhury family of Kulna** (Bangladesh). They are of *Basuki gotro*.

Tekari's great-grandson, **zamindar Krishnananda Dutta Chaudhury** (often refer to as Krishnananda Dutta), who was initiated into the *Brahma-Krishna Naam Mantra* by the *Vaishnava* saint Prabhu Nityananda, passed on all his possessions to his son Kandarpa Ram Dutta Chaudhury, to become an ascetic at Puri where he took **Shri Shri Radha-Madhava** with him and presently this deity is now kept at an ashram in a village called Chotti (Orissa, India). One must not confused zamindar Krishnananda Dutta with Raja Krishnananda Dutta. Because *Raja* Krishnananda Dutta was the king of Gopalpura and the confusion deepens, as both this Krishnananda were related with Nitynanda Mahaprabhu. In fact many authors and internet articles have mixed up *zamindar* Krishnananda Dutta with *Raja* Krishnananda Dutta.

Elder DUTTA CHAUDHURY family members residing in Andul have indicated that we used to worship Mother *Durga* in an "Atchala" structure sometime before 1609. This is as per our family history handed down the generations by the spoken word. *Durga Puja* used to be carried out in accordance with *Tantric* requirements during the earlier days, till it was stopped probably when Krishnananda Dutta Chaudhury became a full-fledged *Vaishnava* due to the influence of Shri Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and Shri Nityananda Prabhu.

In the 16th century, **Madhav Ram Dutta**, the elder of Krishnananda's two sons, moved to a place call, Choa, Murshidabad because he got a good job in the administration of the Nawab of Bengal. So, the **DUTTAs of Murshidabad became the first off-shoot of the DUTTA CHAUDHURY family of Andul**.

Also in the 16th century, **Kandarpa Ram Dutta Chaudhury**, inherited his father's *zamindari*. He had three sons – **Ram Sharan, Gobinda Sharan and Hari Sharan**, who were constantly at loggerheads with each other regarding the distribution of ancestral property. **Gobinda Sharan Dutta Chaudhury** severed ties with Andul, and went over to a place called "Badar Rasa" somewhere in South Calcutta to establish his residence. It is believed that "Badar Rasa" eventually expanded to become "Gobindapur", named after Gobinda Sharan. **Hari Sharan Dutta Chaudhury** got a government job and moved to a place called "Barada" in Muragachha Pargana" near Sonarpur; about 60 kilometres from Diamond Harbour (in the southern suburbs of Kolkata) within the present-day district of South 24 Parganas.

**Ramsharan Dutta Chaudhury**, Kandarpa Ram's eldest son, stayed back in Andul. He had six sons – Mahesh Chandra, Shiv Ram, **Jagannath**, Parvati Charan, Param Chand and **Kashiswar**. Due to the apparent atrocities committed on his property and belongings by his younger brother Gobinda Sharan, Ram Sharan suffered considerable loss in self-esteem. He could not recover from the shock, and passed away. Kashiswar Dutta Chaudhury, was still in his mother's womb when his father Ram Sharan passed away. When Kashiswar was 17 years old, Mughal Prince Shah Jahan happened to be traveling by boat along the Saraswati River while returning from a visit to Orissa. Kashiswar was sighted by the prince's attendants. He was waiting at the river front with an appeal written in Farsi to be submitted to the Prince. It was an appeal for help, describing his ancestral background, mentioning how his family was in dire straits because of the evil deeds perpetuated by his uncle Gobinda Sharan. Shah Jahan beckoned Kashiswar, accepted his appeal, and was so moved by what he read that he immediately ordered the lost estates to be returned back to Kashiswar's family. Kashiswar was able to get back his ancestral properties, and he lived happily ever after with his family as well as with his brothers and their families. Later, Kashiswar Dutta Chaudhury constructed the family's " *Chandi-Mandap*" in Andul Chaudhury Para lane (Near *Shiddeshwari Tola*), Howrah- 711302 and re-started *Durga Puja* in the year of 1609 A.D. in accordance with the traditional requirements of the *Brihannandikeshwara Purana*. Kashiswar is considered as the one who firmly established the family.

The *Durga Puja* of the Dutta Chaudhury family is considered as one of the oldest *pujas* in Bengal. The *Chandi-Mandap* built by Kashiswar unfortunately collapsed around the year 1929 A.D., but his descendants took no time in getting a new one constructed and functioning within a year. The *Chandi-Mandap* is considered as 'shiddho-peeth'.

Nowadays, very few Dutta Chaudhury families continue to reside in Andul. New houses owned by others have sprung up where a lot of Purushottama Dutta's descendants once used to live. Even the original "**Chaudhury Para Bus Stop**" is now more familiarly known as "**Mukherjee Para Bus Stop**". Of the few original families that still live there, one must mention the family of **Bonobehari Dutta Chaudhury** (descendant of Jagganath, s/o Ramsharan Dutta Chaudhury), who have preserved the tradition of celebrating at Kashiswar's *Chandi-Mandap* the annual Durga Puja with devotion by following the scriptures.

Of the descendants of Gobinda Sharan Dutta, it was **Ram Chandra Dutta** and his descendants who moved from Gobindapur to Chitpur and his descendants are known as the **DUTTA family of Chitpore**. Madan Mohan Dutta moved from Chitpur to a place called *Jora-Shivtola*, and Jagat Ram Dutta moved to Nimtala Ghat Street. This general locality is called Hatkhola, and so these families became known as the "**Duttas of Hatkhola**". Jagat Ram and his descendants have been celebrating their *Durga Puja* and *Kali Puja* in their "*Thakur Dalan*" at 78/4 Nimtala Ghat Street, Jorabagan (Near Jorabagan Police Station), Calcutta- 700006, since the year of 1794 A.D. **So, the Duttas of Hatkhola are the off-shoot of zamindar Dutta Chaudhury family of Andul, but have discontinued using "Chaudhury" in their surname.**

**Shyamal Dhon Dutta**, a solicitor of High Court, moved from the Hatkhola ancestral house to his own purchased home at 159-Balaram De Street (Near Girish Park Metro Station), Calcutta – 700006. He had two daughters. The younger one was married to a *kayastha* 'Ghosh' family of *Soukalin gotro*, who later inherited the property at some point of time, but they have continued the tradition of celebrating the *puja* without interruption in Shymal Dhon Dutta's house. They also celebrate *Kali Puja*.

There are some books that have specifically documented our family ancestry. These are:

- (1) **DATTA VANSA MALA** by Kedarnath Dutta [Published: 1875 ]
- (2) **AMAR DESHER KATHA** by Atul Krishna Dutta Chaudhury [Published: 1944 ]
- (3) **KOLIKATAR ETIBRITTO** by Pran Krishna Dutta
- (4) **DUTTA CHAUDHURI CHRONICLES** [with full-family tree] by Hemotpaul Chaudhuri [e-published- 2016].

**\*\* E-Books are available, except for "KOLIKATAR ETIBRITTO" by Pran Krishna Dutta.**

#### SOME OF OUR NOTABLE ANCESTORS:

1. **Madan Mohan Dutta** - Kamdev Dutta Chaudhury had been to the holy city of Gaya to complete the last rites (*Pinda-daan*) of his father Ratnakar Dutta Chaudhury. So, Kamdev prayed to the Lord at the Vishnupada temple to give him the strength and means to have a flight of stairs constructed so as to enable devotees to climb up the mount and fulfill their obligations. He also prayed that someone else amongst his descendants be able to construct the stairs in case he himself failed to get it done. Kamdev's wish came to fruition when his descendant, Madan Mohan Dutta had a staircase of 395 stone steps, rest homes for pilgrims, & facilities for the temple uphill constructed.
2. **Krishnananda Dutta Chaudhury** - He was Tekari Dutta Chaudhury's great-grandson. He was initiated into the *Brahma-Krishna Naam Mantra* by Prabhu Nityananda, the disciple and friend of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. Krishnananda used to worship Shri Shri Radha-Madhava in his Andul house. However, he was so inspired by the Vaishnava way of life that he passed on all his possessions to his younger son, Kandarpa Ram, but took Shri Shri Radha-Madhava to Puri with him when he decided to live an ascetic's life in Puri. Shri Shri Radha Madhava, our original family deity for about 500 years, is currently under the care of the Hare Krishna organization in Choti, Orissa. Krishnananda is the founder of the Chandul-Math.
3. **Akshay Chandra Chaudhury** – The home tutor *i.e.* guru of the first Asian Nobel laureate, Rabindranath Tagore.
4. **Prabhabati (Dutta) Bose** – Mother of Subhas Chandra Bose.
5. **Nistarini (Dutta) Basu** – Maternal grand-mother of Aurobindo Ghosh (well known as Rishi Aurobindo).
6. **Kedarnath Dutta** – Vaishnava scholar, well known as Srila Bhaktivinod Thakur.
7. **Bimala Prasad Dutta** – Well known as Srila Bhaktishidhanta Saraswati Thakur. He was the founder of GAUDIYA MATH, Baghbazar, Calcutta.
8. **Kali Prasad Dutta** - The Kalighat Temple at Calcutta South was erected under the patronage of the Kali Prasad Dutta of Hatkhola Dutta family, with the help of Santosh Roy Chaudhury of the well-known Sabarna Roy Chaudhury family of Barisha, Calcutta South. Kali Prasad Dutta had given Rs.25, 000/- to Santosh Roy Chaudhury as his contribution towards construction of the temple.
9. **Basanta Chaudhury** - The legendary actor of the Bengali Film Industry, Tallygunge, Calcutta South.

NOTE: Some references were taken from the eBook "Dutta Chaudhuri Chronicles".